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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: SITREP 3. HRANT DINK MEMORIAL AND FUNERAL

REF: ISTANBUL 042 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Memorial activities for slain Turkish human rights activist Hrant Dink began promptly at 11 a.m. local time in front of the Agos newspaper editorial offices where Dink had been editor-in-chief. A sea of humanity packed the wide boulevard from side to side for a total of perhaps one-half mile in either direction from the office. The crowd numbered in the tens of thousands. Formal funeral ceremonies at the Armenian patriarchate begin at 2 p.m. local time.

¶2. (U) Prepared signs with black backgrounds and lettering in white held by perhaps every third person proclaimed, "We are all Dink," and "We are all Armenians." A handful read, "301 is the killer." The throng was peaceful and somber. Small groups occasionally broke into applause and threw red carnations into the air. Not boisterous, the applause was likened to soft rain falling on a roof.

¶3. (U) At 11 a.m., Dink's widow Rakel, surrounded by her three children and a daughter-in-law, mounted a sound truck and with some emotion, read a prepared statement. She focused on a life cut short and her love for her husband, but she had some powerful messages for the crowd:

&We are carrying out this procession without any disrespect, without slogans, without placards. Today a loud voice emanates from our silence. (They say (of Dink), &He was a great man.8 I ask you, &was he born that size? No, he was born like us. (The work he did, his manner, his heart,s love made him great. He became great because he thought big and talked about great things. You are great for having come here. But don,t be satisfied with that! (There can be no great future with hate, insults, by preferring one bloodline over the other. You can only rise up if you respect your fellow man. (

&What darkness can make us forget what you said and did, my love? Fear? Life? Persecution? The joys of life? Or death, my love? (You parted from your loved ones, from your children, your grandchildren, from us, from my bosom, but you did not leave your country, my love.8

¶4. (U) Mrs. Dink and her children then hand-released white doves. As the hearse pulled forward toward Taksim and on to the Armenian Patriarchate in the ancient walled city some 4 miles from the Agos office, those on foot passing the Agos office applauded as a sign of respect to Mr. Dink.

¶5. (C) Attendees included several Armenian officials, who arrived quietly, with the tacit approval of the Turkish government. In the end, the GOT delegation was led by Deputy PM Sahin and Interior Minister Aksu. According to MFA spokesman Levent Bilman (please protect), the GOT had worked

closely with the Armenian Patriarch, who had suggested names in the Armenian Diaspora and elsewhere, and facilitated guests' presence.

16. (U) Press commentary continues to be introspective, looking at what lessons can be drawn from Dink's death and what opportunities lie ahead.
JONES